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UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD
COMMITTEE ON DOCUMENTATION

Disposition of Inactive Intelligence Reference Collections

1. The attached staff study concerning reduction of the volume of other agency intelligence documents accumulated by CIA for reference use as well as control of future volume of such documents was approved for implementation in CIA on 18 January 1961. It is herewith transmitted to CODIB for information. An extra copy is included for release to each of your Records Management Officers for use as precedent in establishing similar disposition standards in other agencies as desired.

* 2. Henceforth, as agreed by the Records Management Officers of the Departments of the Air Force, Army and Navy, the Department of State, the Atomic Energy Commission, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Central Intelligence Agency, CIA will, and any other agreeing agency can, dispose of other agency-produced intelligence documents five years after such documents become inactive. Further, any requests for such documents beyond this retention period will be serviced by the Agency of record.

3. This is a very productive step, reflecting good cooperation on the part of the USIB agencies' Records Management Officers. I feel that CODIB should hereby applaud this cooperative and productive spirit. Let's see now if we can develop an effective means of purging the active holdings of the various storage and retrieval systems.

Paul A. Borel
Chairman

Attachments

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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : AD/OCR

DATE: 10 JAN 1961

ATTN :

FROM : Chief, Records Management Staff

SUBJECT: Disposition of Intelligence Reference Collections

1. The attached staff study describes a completed records management project that will reduce and control the volume of reference collections accumulated by OCR Library.

2. This project has established agreements between CIA and other Agencies of the USIB community that provide disposition standards for 4,000 cubic feet of OCR material in the Records Center and at Headquarters. Approximately 25% of this material can be destroyed immediately and the remainder on a continuing basis. Furthermore, application of these disposition standards will control future growth of reference collections within OCR and elsewhere in the Agency.

3. Your approval is appreciated.

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Office Memorandum

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Chief, Records Management Staff

DATE: 10 JAN 1961

STAT FROM : Records Analyst, RMS

SUBJECT: Disposition of Intelligence Reference Collections in OCR

1. Problem

- a. To reduce the volume of other agency intelligence documents accumulated by CIA for reference use.
- b. To control the future volume of such documents.

2. Facts Bearing on the Problem

- a. The member agencies of USIB produce intelligence documents copies of which are exchanged within the community for reference use. CIA receives annually an average of 5 million copies of such documents.
- b. At the present time approximately 2,000 cu. ft. of other agency intelligence documents are held by the CIA Library in hard copy or microfilm. An additional 2,000 cu. ft. are stored in the Records Center and much of this is now more than 10 years old.
- c. Disposition instructions for this type of material usually read "Destroy when no longer needed for reference purposes" or "Destroy when superseded or obsolete." These instructions have accomplished little in controlling growth of the reference collection because of a nebulous, unofficial opinion within CIA and some agencies of the USIB community that the CIA Library is a central, permanent repository for the USIB documents it receives. A corollary of this opinion is the notion that once a reference document is destroyed future retrieval of a copy would be difficult if not impossible. There is no official basis for this thinking and it conflicts with the findings of the Hoover Commission report of 1955 on "Intelligence Activities." This report noted that a central library for the intelligence community was impracticable. However, the influence of the unofficial opinion has contributed to some reluctance on the part of librarians and analysts to discard inactive reference material.

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- d. Traditionally government and non-government libraries have geared their disposal practices to the availability of shelving space. When new books or other items arrive and space is needed, the inactive material is weeded out and destroyed or transferred to the Library of Congress. In CIA books are transferred to Library of Congress and other items are stored in the Records Center.
- e. It is cheaper to store records in proper records center facilities than to microfilm them. The Hoover Committee reported that on the average it costs \$40.00 to microfilm 1 cu. ft. of records and about 60 cents to keep the same records in a records center for 1 year. In this instance the break even point is not reached for more than 60 years.
- f. Today non-government libraries are taking other approaches to controlling the volume of holdings. Microfilm is one of these. Another is the Library Center plan that provides a central storage facility for libraries of a geographical area, and a central reference service to the materials deposited. This plan permits disposal of duplicate holdings among member libraries of the area. There is also the so called Farmington Plan that seeks to limit growth and duplication of holdings. Under this plan mutual agreements are secured among certain libraries to assume responsibility for acquisitions in specialized fields of knowledge, and to furnish mutual reference service on these collections.

3. Discussion

- a. No precedents or standards exist for the systematic disposal of intelligence reference files. This conclusion was reached after discussions with staff members of the National Archives and Records Service, GSA, and records officers of USIB agencies.
- b.

estimates that strategic intelligence information in peacetime depreciates at the rate of 20% per year at a constant rate. Experience of the Agency Records Center indicates that calls for retired reference materials decrease to a negligible point within 5 years.
- c. Since librarians are usually involved in the administration of intelligence reference collections, a central concept of the Farmington Plan, specialization in holdings, was considered to be an effective basis for negotiating the objective of this project within the intelligence community. It is essential that USIB Agencies accumulate and have ready reference to each others specialized products. However, there is no necessity for retaining this reference material indefinitely after it becomes inactive, because other copies or originals are retained by the Agency of origin. Each USIB

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Agency is thus building a specialized collection of its own intelligence products. Access to these collections in case of need after destruction of inactive reference copies would encourage disposal and establish volume control of intelligence reference collections.

- d. Any working arrangement that would insure inter-agency access to specialized collections required existence of the following conditions:
 1. Each Agency would agree that copies of intelligence documents used for reference should be destroyed after becoming inactive.
 2. Each Agency would assume responsibility for maintaining record copies of its own intelligence documents.
 3. Each Agency would agree to furnish reference service on its record copies of intelligence documents after destruction of reference copies in other Agencies.
- e. In January 1959 a meeting of Records Management Officers from USIB Agencies was called by the Chief, Records Management Staff, CIA (See Tab A). The purpose of this meeting was to discuss informal means of controlling growth of reference collections and to secure reactions to establishing the conditions noted above. It was the unanimous opinion of those present that disposal of reference collections presented a constant problem, and that the CIA representatives should proceed in a pioneering effort to establish disposition standards for such materials.

4. Conclusions

- a. After discussions with the ARO/OCR, the Chief, Circulation Branch, LY/OCR and the Chief, Records Center a proposed interagency agreement on disposal of reference collections was drafted and approved by the AD/OCR. The proposal called for destruction of reference materials 5 years after becoming inactive. This retention period was based on Records Center experience. The initial agreement was drafted for concurrence of the Department of State (Tab B) and became the basic CIA position in informal negotiations with other USIB Agencies. Beginning with State Department, the proposed agreement was presented in meetings with the Records Management Officers of each USIB Agency.
- b. The key principle of the CIA proposal, interagency access to each others intelligence collections after destruction of reference copies, was concurred in by the Departments of the Army, Navy and Air Force, the Department of State, the Atomic Energy Commission and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. (See Tab C).

- c. On the basis of these agreements more specific disposal instructions could be issued for reference collections of documents furnished by USIB Agencies. These instructions would read: "Transfer to Records Center when inactive. Destroy after 5 years."
- d. Approximately 4000 cubic feet of reference material held by the Records Center and the OCR Library are now subject to these instructions. About 25% of this material could be destroyed at once and the remainder on a continuing basis.
- e. Future growth of Agency reference collections could be controlled by application of these instructions.

5. Action Recommended

- a. That the AD/OCR issue disposition instructions for LY/OCR reference collections reading: "Transfer to Records Center when inactive. Destroy after 5 years."
- b. That copies of this staff study be released to the Records Management Officers in USIB Agencies for use as a precedent in establishing similar disposition standards within those Agencies.
- c. That reports on the volume of material destroyed under the new standards be submitted to the Chief, Records Management Staff.

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Annexes:

Tab A - Memorandum of USIB Agencies records officers meeting.

Tab B - CIA - State Agreement on Disposal of Documents.

Tab C - USIB Agencies Agreements.

Concurrence:

10 January 1961

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(Signature)

Assistant Director for
Central Reference
(Title)

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